



Food safety advice

MOST COMMON CAUSES OF FOOD POISONING

Why do people get food poisoning?

Food prepared too far in advance

Food is best prepared just before you want to eat it. If you have to prepare items in advance, store them in a covered container in the refrigerator.



Food stored at room temperatures – not under refrigeration or not kept hot

If you have to keep food waiting before you eat it then it must be kept:

- Cold - in a refrigerator which is working at 8°C or colder; or
- Hot - in an oven/on the hob or in hot holding equipment at 63°C or hotter.
- Always cover food that you are waiting to eat:
 - in the refrigerator, it protects it from contamination and stops it drying out.
 - in the oven, it stops the food from drying out.

NB Rice can cause food poisoning if you don't keep it cold or hot. If you want to keep rice to eat cold (in a salad) never leave it out in the kitchen. It can be cooled quickly by putting it in a colander and rinsing it under cold water then refrigerated.

Cooling food too slowly before refrigeration



- Never leave food out overnight to cool down. Whether it's a joint of meat, a casserole, soup etc. You are allowing harmful bacteria time to grow.
- Cool food quickly (preferably within 1½ hours) and put it in the refrigerator.
- You can cool joints of meat by cutting them up or by keeping them small (<2.5kg)
- You can cool stews and casseroles quicker by putting them into a large shallow container.

Not reheating food to a high enough temperature to destroy food poisoning bacteria

If you are re-heating food, then you need to ensure it is ' piping hot '. It needs to be above 75°C to make sure that any harmful bacteria in the food have been killed.



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Under cooking meat and meat products

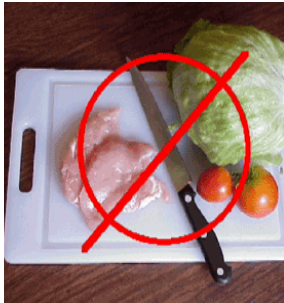
Meats have to be cooked thoroughly to kill all the harmful bacteria. The centre of the meat needs to reach 75 °C. If you don't have a meat thermometer at home, push a skewer into the thickest part of the meat. When it's cooked properly, the juices should run clear with no signs of blood.



Not thawing frozen meat and poultry for sufficient time before cooking

If food is not thawed thoroughly, the centre will still be frozen and it will not cook effectively. The food may remain raw in the centre and bacteria will survive.

Cross contamination from raw to cooked foods



All raw foods contain bacteria, some of which can be harmful to humans if it allowed the right conditions to grow. It is important therefore to keep raw foods and cooked foods separate.

Do this by keeping them in different parts of the refrigerator (cooked at the top, raw at the bottom) and by keeping them covered. Raw meats must be kept at the very bottom of the fridge (not above anything else).

Germs can also be spread if you do not clean worktops, cutting boards, knives and other utensils after they have been in contact with raw food.

Don't use the same knife and chopping board to cut up raw meat and then ready to eat foods such as salad and cooked meats!

Infected food handlers

If you are suffering from a stomach upset, from vomiting or diarrhoea, then you shouldn't be handling food or cooking for the family. Get someone else to do it until you've had no symptoms for 48 hours.

ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS

- after using the toilet
- before starting to prepare food
- after handling raw food
- after handling rubbish
- after feeding pets
- after handling dirty laundry
- dry your hands after you've washed them

